

BETWEEN THE ENIGMA OF THE CITY AND THE DIGITAL FEED: THE BRECHOLEIRAS FAIR AND THE URBAN TERRITORY OF MADUREIRA

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ABSTRACT

Madureira is one of the most vibrant neighbourhoods in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro. As a site of creative street occupations, Madureira emerges as both a tangible and imagined space, interwoven with memories, affections, and everyday practices that reinvent its streets, squares, and viaducts, such as Negrão de Lima, considered the main access route to the neighbourhood. On Saturdays, the low-lying areas of this space transform into the Feira das Brecholeiras (Brecholeiras Fair), an event selling new and second-hand items at attractive prices. This article examines the strong connection between the fair and Madureira, regarded as the symbolic heart of the Carioca suburbs. The relationship is explored through the analysis of posts, reels, and stories published between 29 July and 31 August 2025 on the official event channels: two Facebook pages (Brecholeiras and Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ Vitrine Virtual) and an Instagram profile (@brecholeirasoficial). Selected YouTube content from other channels was also analysed, given its role in promoting both the event and the urban territory of Madureira. The study combined a bibliographic survey with narrative analysis, focusing on the construction and representation of Madureira's everyday life in the analysed posts. The aim was to identify narratives that highlight the connection between the event and the neighbourhood, revealing how each promotes the other in their everyday experiences. In conclusion, the findings demonstrate narratives that expose the link between the Feira das Brecholeiras and Madureira, showing that both mutually promote and complement one another.

KEYWORDS

city-enigma, urban territory, suburb, Madureira, Feira das Brecholeiras

ENTRE O ENIGMA DA CIDADE E O *FEED* DIGITAL: A FEIRA DAS BRECHOLEIRAS E O TERRITÓRIO URBANO DE MADUREIRA

RESUMO

Madureira é um dos bairros mais pulsantes do subúrbio da cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Palco de ocupações criativas na rua, Madureira revela-se como um espaço concreto e imaginado, atravessado por memórias, afetos e práticas cotidianas que reinventam suas ruas, praças e viadutos, como o Negrão de Lima, considerado a principal via de acesso ao bairro. Aos sábados, o baio daquele espaço se transforma na Feira das Brecholeiras, evento que comercializa artigos novos e usados a preços atrativos. O objetivo deste artigo é discutir a forte conexão da feira com Madureira, considerada o coração simbólico do subúrbio carioca. Investigamos como essa relação é narrada por meio da análise de postagens, *reels* e *stories*, publicados, entre 29 de julho e 31 de agosto de 2025, nos canais oficiais de divulgação do evento: duas páginas no Facebook (Brecholeiras e Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ) Vitrine Virtual) e um perfil no Instagram (@brecholeirasoficial). Avaliamos também alguns conteúdos veiculados no YouTube por outros canais, por entendermos que funcionam como espaços para divulgação do evento e do território urbano de Madureira. O estudo foi conduzido a partir da articulação entre levantamento bibliográfico e análise da narrativa, com foco na construção e representação do dia a dia de Madureira nas postagens analisadas. Buscamos, assim, identificar narrativas que evidenciam a conexão entre o evento e Madureira, revelando como um divulga o outro em suas vivências cotidianas. Em conclusão, identificamos narrativas que revelam a conexão entre a Feira das Brecholeiras e o bairro, explicitando que ambos se promovem e se complementam mutuamente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

cidade-enigma, território urbano, subúrbio, Madureira, Feira das Brecholeiras

1. INTRODUCTION

Cities are in constant transformation and can, at times, present themselves as enigmas and palimpsests, retaining layers of history, memory, and meaning that overlap (Pesavento, 2004), demanding careful, sensitive reading from those navigating them. Understanding a landscape thus extends beyond mere observation: it serves as a starting point for analysing the relationship between space and society (Berque, 2012). A landscape exists through the individual who organises it, combining elements and processes into a mosaic of forms and content (Gomes, 2001). In the context under analysis, the urban landscape is also a social landscape, shaped and reshaped by human actions over time. Even in areas planned by urban designers, the passage of time reveals new layers, “whether through the destruction of the oldest, understood as outdated, anachronistic, non-functional, or worn enough to warrant replacement” (Pesavento, 2004, p. 27).

The city of Rio de Janeiro exemplifies such complexity. It is a city both imagined and lived, pulsating in the daily life of its inhabitants. Above all, it is a real city, hosting “actors, social relations, characters, groups, classes, practices of interaction and opposition, rites and festivals, behaviours and habits” (Pesavento, 2007, p. 14).

This multiplicity of Rio is also shaped by the neighbourhoods bordering the railway line. It is a suburban city, alive with polyphonies and creativity, particularly in the occupation of public street space. It is the Rio of cultural effervescence: the Baile Charme¹, the Feira das Brecholeiras (Brecholeiras Fair), the *feijoada* at the Portela samba school²... The focus of the present study is this Rio: the Rio of Madureira, the symbolic heart of the northern zone for its residents, embodying the essence of the Carioca suburbs. From this perspective, the present study examines the Feira das Brecholeiras, which takes place on Saturdays between 08:00 and 15:00 beneath the Negrão de Lima viaduct in Madureira.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to highlight the strong connection between the Feira das Brecholeiras and the neighbourhood of Madureira, and to examine how this relationship is narrated through the event's official communication channels: two Facebook pages (Brecholeiras and Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ Vitrine Virtual) and an Instagram profile (@brecholeirasoficial), as well as two YouTube channels, Eu Te Amo Madureira and Saudapixel Games.

The study is based on the premise that the content presented is fragmented, edited, and unfit to fully convey the essence of what is genuinely experienced and felt at the fair and in the neighbourhood, both characterised by spontaneous encounters and an affective atmosphere. The analysis seeks to observe how the Feira das Brecholeiras functions as a tool for promoting and valorising the urban territory of Madureira.

The *corpus* was selected through three searches on Google and YouTube, anchored in the two keywords: “Feira das Brecholeiras” and “Madureira”. In the first Google search, several Facebook pages were identified, including Amigas Brecholeiras, Brecholeiras de Plantão_Maricá, and Só Brecholeiras, as well as profiles such as @brecholeirasdazo, @brecholeiras_madu, and @brecholeirasg. Most of these profiles and pages belong to groups from other municipalities in Rio de Janeiro or other Brazilian states that have appropriated the name “brecholeiras”, which is registered as a trademark at the National Institute of Industrial Property by the official members of Madureira.

To refine the search, the second Google search and the YouTube survey included events in Madureira and thrift shops as indexing terms. The search yielded various results related to Madureira park, one of the city's main urban spaces. However, these were excluded from the analysis because they were not relevant to the study's focus. Some content was also identified on TikTok; however, this was discarded as it only displayed items for sale.

Although the Feira das Brecholeiras does not use YouTube as an official media platform, it was included in the study to identify content documenting the occupation of the lower part of the Negrão de Lima viaduct, which evidences its strong connection

¹ A dance held beneath the Negrão de Lima viaduct in Madureira, combining classical references from soul, R&B, jazz, and hip-hop, attracting approximately 5,000 participants at each edition (Boeckel, 2025).

² A traditional *feijoada* (stew of beans with meat) taking place at the Portela samba school grounds, also located in Madureira (Portela, n.d.).

with the neighbourhood. Numerous short-form videos about the fair were identified, along with 15 longer videos exceeding 10 minutes, published between 2021 and 2025.

For the selection of posts, three criteria were adopted: (a) directly addressing the Feira das Brecholeiras, (b) highlighting its relevance to Madureira, and (c) evidencing the intrinsic link between the event and the territory beneath the Negrão de Lima viaduct.

It should be noted that, in all analyses, the anonymity of the authors of comments on the posts was preserved. For ethical reasons, only the comments were considered, in line with procedures recommended for qualitative research.

For the analysis, posts and stories in image, text, or reel formats published on the three Brecholeiras social media platforms between 29 July and 31 August 2025 were examined, along with two YouTube videos. The *corpus* comprised:

- Two posts published on 28 and 29 August 2025 on the Facebook page Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ Vitrine Virtual;
- One post published on 12 August 2025 on the Facebook page Brecholeiras;
- Two reels shared on 29 July 2025 and 8 August 2025 on the Instagram profile @brecholeirasoficial;
- One carousel published on 30 August 2025 on the Instagram profile @brecholeirasoficial;
- One story published on 30 August 2025 on the Instagram profile @brecholeirasoficial;
- One video published in 2021 on the YouTube channel Eu Te Amo Madureira;
- One video published in 2022 on the YouTube channel Saudapixel Games.

The study combined a bibliographic survey with narrative analysis, focusing on the construction and representation of Madureira's everyday life in the analysed posts. The aim was to identify narratives that reinforce the connection between the fair, the Negrão de Lima viaduct, and Madureira, demonstrating how these elements mutually legitimise and strengthen one another through practices and everyday experiences.

Narrative analysis was selected as it constitutes a qualitative, interpretative, and dialogical methodology that not only reflects reality but also reveals processes of resistance and the resignification of meanings (Bastos & Biar, 2015). Moreover, narratives recount stories in everyday contexts and in seemingly spontaneous situations, fostering dialogue across different fields of knowledge and examining the discourse of social actors in diverse social contexts. This methodology therefore seeks to describe events in social life, historical and social processes, as well as to explore the meanings that individuals create and circulate through the production of narratives.

Such processes highlight how narratives generate meaning interactively (Spink, 2010). For example, the audience may agree or disagree with the perspectives presented in the selected posts, producing new interpretations. This demonstrates that meanings are constructed socially rather than individually: “meaning is always interactive: one person's utterances are always in contact with, or addressed to, another person, and these exchanges mutually influence each other” (Spink, 2010, p. 35).

3. CITY AS MOSAIC: UNDERSTANDING SPACE AND TIME

A city is not merely the sum of its streets, neighbourhoods, and the people who move through it. It is also a lived space, woven from encounters, memories, and affective experiences. Understanding a city requires looking beyond its materiality. Comprehending it involves observing how its spaces are occupied and the meanings that emerge from everyday life.

For Le Goff (1997/1998), a city is inherently connected to sociability, although he acknowledges that the urban environment has also become synonymous with individualism. According to Simmel (1979), metropolises encourage such attitudes. Behaviour becomes more rational and detached. To protect themselves from excessive stimuli, such as car horns and shop signs, urban dwellers adopt social masks. They choose to maintain distance and prefer detachment. In other words, the individual observes while keeping a distance, transforming the city into a stage of presences and absences, where each gaze captures fragments of daily life, as if the urban world were a mosaic of intertwined stories, sounds, and silences.

Although this stance is individual, it reflects the complexity of cities and demonstrates the need for critical evaluation. By adopting masks, the urbanite reveals the multiplicity of experiences coexisting within the city. In this way, they show that urban understanding requires attention to differences. According to Jacques and Velloso (2023), this critical stance is essential, as urban experience unfolds in the everyday life of those moving through the city, “thanks to the tactile reception of spaces, which constitutes (...) through the interplay of shock and distraction of habit that marks the use of space” (p. 145). The authors further note that the memory of the individual, combined with that of the place, also influences this process: “the momentary convergence of someone’s memory — in its rhythms and in the engagement of the body itself when frequenting a space — and the memory of that same place is what gives meaning to an experience in the strict sense” (Jacques & Velloso, 2023, p. 145).

Everyday experience not only reveals the richness of urban life but also the structural complexity of cities. For Benjamin (1982/2006), cities are not static; they are organisms in constant transformation, woven from numerous urban fragments that overlap, dissolve, and reconstruct independently, like pieces of a puzzle. In this symbolic interplay, the city manifests as an enigma — fragmented and constantly changing — whose elements, when combined, form a whole in continuous reconstruction. Drawing an analogy between enigma and mystery, Benjamin argues that cities present themselves as enigmas. Whereas mystery is like a veil that conceals and remains distant and inaccessible, an enigma exposes, inviting the gaze to recombine meanings and generate new readings with each urban experience.

Inspired by Benjamin (1982/2006), Jacques and Velloso (2023) propose the concept of the “city-enigma” as an approach for understanding cities in transformation. According to the authors, cities should be thought of and narrated from this perspective of proximity, which surprises and confuses, since everyday experiences and cultural meanings do not always align in an obvious way. For the researchers, presenting and

narrating the city-enigma does not involve decoding it, but rather experiencing it without attempting to control or diminish its complexity.

By contrast, Pesavento (2004) views cities as enigmas that require careful reading for their meanings to be apprehended. For her, cities are palimpsests, ancient manuscripts rewritten over one another, “where the scraping of one could not erase all the characters of those that preceded it” (Pesavento, 2004, p. 26). Accordingly, cities must be deciphered, as each carries layers of overlapping histories.

A city encompasses a diversity of built spaces arranged in combinations resulting from superimpositions, replacements, or compositions. From this perspective, the city, in its materiality, is a palimpsest of forms that transform over time. Extending this view, Jacques and Velloso (2023) emphasise the importance of including elements beyond the physical ordering and its manifestations in urban territory. According to the authors, it is necessary to consider all that exceeds the planned form of the city: its unregulated growth, its fringes and peripheries, the conflicts and claims of its inhabitants, their demands for space, and their own ways of life.

It is at this point that the Carioca suburb, and particularly Madureira, emerges as a living example of a plural city. Traversed by memories, affects, movements, and creative occupations, the neighbourhood reinvents its spaces beyond urban planning, demonstrating a possible harmony between the built city and the ways of living within it.

4. MADUREIRA AND THE TRACES OF A CITY ENIGMA

The Carioca suburb encompasses most of the northern zone neighbourhoods. In common perception, the southern zone of Rio de Janeiro is associated with wealth, beauty, and modernity. In contrast, the suburbs are seen as the polar opposite (Brennand, 2021): unattractive, poor, lacking in beauty, and limited to neighbourhoods along the railway line, such as Riachuelo, Piedade, and Cascadura.

Despite this stereotype-laden imaginary, the way the suburbs appear in official publications of the Rio de Janeiro City Hall on Instagram (@prefeitura_rio; Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro, n.d.) does not directly reinforce this image. In these publications, the suburbs appear primarily as the backdrop for social projects. For example, in a story published on 26 November 2025, a 1-minute 23-second video showed the grounds of the Portela samba school being used to distribute a benefit of R\$ 200 per month to families with children aged 0–4 in situations of social vulnerability. Such content functions, in practice, as a form of accountability, challenging the common perception that governmental actions — and resources — are concentrated in the city’s glorified southern zone.

Government institutions typically develop their communication models with the assistance of marketing advisers, public relations professionals, and advertisers, before disseminating them to society and the market. However, this process presents two limitations: (a) the absence of public discussion, and (b) the risk of reinforcing representations based on stereotypes and social stigma (Andrade et al., 2024). According to the authors, the lack of public debate prevents citizens from actively participating in the

development of communication strategies for their own territories. By excluding diverse perspectives and open dialogue, communication initiatives may fail to reflect the aspirations, values, and identities of the local population.

In this context, understanding the suburbs in their complexity is essential to move beyond reductive narratives and to broaden citizen participation in the symbolic construction of their territories. Despite social and economic marginalisation, the suburbs are polyphonic, marked by singular beauty and creativity, particularly in their cultural effervescence and artistic manifestations. These practices are revealed in celebrations and spaces that host collective cultural activities (Brennand, 2018). To speak of the Carioca suburbs, therefore, is to recognise them as areas endowed with economic, political, social, and cultural autonomy relative to the city centre, challenging the stigma of being understood solely as the zones “where the train passes” (Fernandez & Santos, 2015).

At the heart of this vibrant suburb, Madureira emerges as both a concrete and imagined space, traversed by everyday practices that continuously reinvent its streets. Simultaneously, the neighbourhood stands out economically: it is one of the most populous in the Carioca suburbs and owes much of its prominence to the Madureira market, inaugurated in 1914, which spurred local growth and remains a key commercial reference to this day (Fernandez & Santos, 2015)

Considered the symbolic heart of the northern zone by its residents, Madureira is “famous for samba, for Tia Surica’s *feijoada*, for Portela, for Império Serrano³... Samba is in the air, it is true. But it does not live by music alone” (Brennand, 2021, p. 89). The neighbourhood forms “a portion of the public space in general (anonymous, belonging to everyone) in which a private space gradually emerges, particularised by the almost daily use of that space” (Certeau et al., 1994/2000, p. 40).

Another defining feature of Madureira is the creativity in transforming urban space. Drawing on Certeau’s (1990/1994) description of subtle, almost invisible, improvisational tactics, it is possible to understand how areas planned by the formal system are resignified within the neighbourhood. This movement resonates with what Jacques and Velloso (2023) refer to as “fringes”, emphasising the inclusion of other elements in urban configuration. In Madureira, these tactics manifest in streets that become vast informal markets and in viaducts, designed for traffic flow, that are (re)appropriated. Such occupations subvert the intended uses of urban designers and reveal the constant reinvention of urban space.

These practices are necessary because, as Azeredo (2019) observes, the more standardised spaces are, the more people distance themselves from them: “it is difficult to develop attachment to, or to care for, that with which one does not identify, and which does not feel like one’s own” (p. 22). Madureira is part of the city that expresses itself as a chorus, “with diverse voices all co-present: a city narrated by a polyphonic chorus, in which multiple musical itineraries or material sounds intersect, meet, and merge” (Canevacci, 2004, p. 15).

³ Another samba school in Madureira.

Everyday life in Madureira reveals layers of memory and history superimposed, making the neighbourhood an urban palimpsest, where past and present meet and constantly reinvent themselves. The neighbourhood, as a built space, is also a space of meaning, value, and understanding, whose significance was once constructed and established by its inhabitants. These past meanings, in light of Pesavento's (2004) ideas, resemble palimpsests that must be deciphered, "for they made of that space a place — a space endowed with meaning — which had its intelligibility in historical correspondence with time" (p. 28).

This historical and symbolic character coexists with the constant transformations of the physical space. Azeredo (2019) emphasises that the neighbourhood has been affected by significant changes, including the remodelling of unplanned areas and the expansion of activities and programmes. Despite these changes, Madureira resists urban homogenisation and standardisation, maintaining a strong attachment to its historical context, character, and local identity. According to the author, this effort is positive, as cities are not only inhabited spaces but also representations of social space, constituted by diverse individuals who require "diverse spaces, designed for their own scenario, as opposed to the naturalisation of past and present social relations" (Azeredo, 2019, p. 22).

In the context of resignifying urban areas, Madureira also exemplifies a city-enigma, composed of multiple fragments: physical spaces, such as streets and viaducts, and symbolic fragments, constituted by memories and cultural practices. Each fragment maintains its own logic, overlapping, dissolving, and reconstructing independently, like pieces of a puzzle, echoing Benjamin's (1982/2006) understanding of cities as enigmas.

5. MEMORIES AND AFFECTS BENEATH THE NEGRÃO DE LIMA VIADUCT

The Negrão de Lima viaduct, the main access route to Madureira, is more than a solution for urban mobility; it has become a symbolic landmark of the neighbourhood. Designed to facilitate traffic flow, the viaduct acquired new meanings through the appropriation of its undercroft spaces⁴. When it was conceived, around 1948, the project did not take other forms of occupation into account: "the planners did not imagine that the space beneath the viaduct would also give way to parking, the Baile Charme, the Feira das Brecholeiras, and street vendors' stalls" (Brennand, 2022, p. 85).

In everyday life, the spaces beneath the viaduct reveal different configurations. During the day, the area primarily serves as a passageway for students, employees of nearby shops, and passersby. However, as evening approaches and movement intensifies, the site fosters "casual encounters, regardless of purpose, generated by the knot of activities concentrated in the area" (Azeredo, 2019, p. 25). In this way, the space beneath the Negrão de Lima viaduct becomes a transitional space, a territory of belonging, or a place imbued with memory and affect, depending on the uses and meanings attributed to it.

⁴ Spaces located beneath a viaduct (Azeredo, 2019).

For this reason, urban appropriation emerges as a practice of recovery and resignification of previously neglected areas. By occupying and redefining these spaces, local populations reorganise the territory and assign new meanings to places such as viaduct underpasses (Azeredo, 2019).

Within this broader context of urban resignification, the Feira das Brecholeiras⁵ stands out as a creative example of appropriation and citizenship. Beneath the viaduct, the event transforms the undercroft into a meeting point that provides income for 120 women, who gather to sell new and second-hand goods, thereby securing their families' livelihoods (Jesus, 2021).

The fair is the product of female entrepreneurship and emerged from the productive mobilisation of 10 women who decided to give a new purpose to items left idle in their wardrobes. The group's trajectory began online, in 2012, on Orkut (now defunct), facilitating the exchange of clothes and shoes among women who could not afford to shop in stores, as one *brecholeira* told O Globo on 1 September 2021: "we wanted to consume, but we couldn't. Exchanging items was an alternative to getting different pieces without spending money" (Jesus, 2021, para. 3). What started discreetly eventually grew, reaching an unimaginable scale at the Madureira train station, drawing the attention of the police. The same *brecholeira* explains: "we were attacked, but we resisted. From that day on, we left the train station and were embraced by Cufa [Central Única das Favelas], which gave us space to work, whether with second-hand or new items" (Jesus, 2021, para. 5).

On Saturdays, between 08:00 and 15:00, in front of Cufa's headquarters, the initiative — managed by four women — occupies a large portion of the space beneath the Negrão de Lima viaduct⁶. The event offers toys, shoes, bags, various accessories, and clothing, the main attraction of the space. Most items are second-hand, with an average price of around R\$ 10 (Brennand, 2021).

The gathering mostly involves women — consumers, vendors, attendees, and administrators — of various age groups. According to Brennand (2021), around 80 exhibitors participate in each edition, although there is a waiting list for a selling space that can last up to a year.

Circulating through the fair and conversing with the *brecholeiras* and attendees reveals that visits go far beyond purchasing second-hand items. People come for a variety of reasons: "to chat, exchange confidences with the *brecholeiras*, look at the new items, meet friends, and buy a few things. (...) The spirit is 'like one big family,' according to the impressions of one attendee" (Brennand, 2021, p. 253). In common, all share legitimate reasons for occupying this space, imbued with meanings, memories, and histories, which feed the lived narratives of the event. The fair translates the lived experience of Madureira

⁵ The name "brecholeiras" is a combination of two terms: "brechós" (second-hand shops) and "sacoleiras" (informal street vendors). According to one of the fair's administrators, "the perception of a sacoleira is negative. It seems like a petty trader, right? So we thought of *brecholeira*, and it stuck" (Brennand, 2021, p. 195).

⁶ Between 2018 and 2019, the Feira das Brecholeiras was also held in the neighbourhoods of Praça Seca, Caxambi, and Barra da Tijuca, as well as in Nova Iguaçu. Following the suspension of activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the fair resumed on 25 July 2020, with editions concentrated exclusively in Madureira (Brennand, 2021). In July 2025, the event expanded once again, taking place in Cascadura as well.

as a natural extension of the neighbourhood: it is difficult to think of Madureira without the fair, just as it is difficult to imagine the fair without Madureira.

6. THE BRECHOLEIRAS FEED AS A SHOWCASE OF THE URBAN TERRITORY OF MADUREIRA

The Feira das Brecholeiras also operates in the digital environment, which has become its primary tool for dissemination. Officially, the group maintains two Facebook pages (Brecholeiras and Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ Vitrine Virtual) and an Instagram profile (@brecholeirasoficial).

Brecholeiras is the official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/brecholeiras.rj/>), with around 17,000 followers⁷. More institutional in character, it is used to replicate posts from the official Instagram account and to promote merchandise. Among the digital channels, it has the lowest visibility and the slowest growth in new followers⁸, functioning primarily as a support channel for Instagram. With the fair's expansion to Cascadura, another well-known neighbourhood in the Rio de Janeiro suburbs, the page began publicising this new location as well, resulting in confusing content that is less appealing to those following the fair specifically in Madureira. The latest update⁹, posted on 12 August 2025, consisted solely of an invitation for *brecholeiras* to participate as exhibitors at the new location. The post included multiple overlapping photographs of the event, making it difficult for potential participants to assess. In this context, it would have been more strategic to create a separate profile for the Cascadura fair.

The page Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ Vitrine Virtual (https://www.facebook.com/groups/1024272690964351/?locale=pt_BR) demonstrates, even in its name, the strong connection with Madureira. This relationship is reinforced by the cover image, which displays the address and a photograph of the fair beneath the Negrão de Lima viaduct, a setting immediately recognised by those familiar with the area. Used as a showcase for the items sold, the page also functions as a sales channel and, on 29 August 2025, had approximately 136,000 members¹⁰.

On this page, it is possible to reserve items and arrange payment and collection times for the fair. Generally, priority is given to those who reserve first. If a person does not attend, the item is returned to sale at the event (Brennand, 2021). The use of Facebook as both a promotional tool and a reservation channel is an interesting strategy, although its potential is underutilised, as the page is somewhat disorganised. Several *brecholeiras* posts are posted simultaneously, making it difficult to view products and engage with the content.

The terms of use, however, are clearly described on the page to avoid conflicts. Among them is the prohibition of promoting other websites, pages, or companies; only

⁷ Data were collected on 28 August 2025.

⁸ In 2021, the page had 13,281 followers (Brennand, 2021). Between 2021 and 2025, only 3,719 new members joined.

⁹ Data were collected on 29 August 2025.

¹⁰ On 10 April 2020, the page Brecholeiras – CUFA Madureira/RJ Vitrine Virtual had 116,389 members (Brennand, 2021). Over the following five years, between April 2020 and August 2025, the page gained approximately 20,000 new members.

posts by registered *brecholeiras* or those associated with Cufa are permitted. Unlike other Facebook pages, the “Vitrine” posts a large volume of content in a short time, making it difficult for users to keep up with new items.

The absence of a clear chronological order further compounds this challenge. For example, posts from 28 August 2025 appeared above content from 25 August, indicating that no posts were on the 26th or 27th. In one such post, a grey wool waistcoat was displayed through three close-up photographs on a mannequin. Due to the framing of the images, it was not possible to assess, for instance, the item’s length. The description indicated that it was a size 44, stretchable, and lightly used. However, the unappealing photographs and lack of additional information may have contributed to the absence of likes and comments. Presenting the product in a broader context, such as in combination with other items, could potentially increase public interest.

On 29 August 2025, the absence of a clear chronological order was again observed. Posts from that day were displayed alongside content from 27 August 2025, reinforcing the lack of a temporal pattern. This disorganisation was evident in the brand Animale’s promotion of a leopard-print dress for R\$ 25. The photographs were low-resolution and did not enhance the item’s appeal. The caption merely indicated that the garment fits up to size 44. As with the other post, there was no user engagement; however, given that it was a luxury brand, the dress might have potentially attracted more attention from fair attendees.

During the 34 days of analysis, a limited number of likes and comments were observed across posts on this page, indicating a potential fatigue with this dissemination tool, which prioritises products over connections to the neighbourhood. As the focus is on merchandise, there are no images that consistently convey the relationship between the Feira das Brecholeiras and Madureira. Beyond the page’s name, cover photograph, and the event’s address, there were virtually no other references to Madureira.

By contrast, the Instagram profile @brecholeirasoficial (<https://www.instagram.com/brecholeirasoficial/>) exhibits a stronger visual integration with the neighbourhood. Reels and stories frequently feature images of the viaduct crowded with rails, clothing, and vendors, reinforcing the association of the Feira das Brecholeiras with the urban space of Madureira. A reel, published on 29 July 2025, reinforces the connection between the Feira das Brecholeiras and the neighbourhood (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DMsTVJ2M6Ra/>). The video shows stalls densely stocked with a wide variety of goods, alongside images of the Negrão de Lima viaduct. This element symbolises the fair’s insertion into the territory and reinforces its role in local identity. The caption included details about the address and opening hours. Engagement for this reel was low, with only 47 likes and five comments, most of which requested further information about the event.

Created on 24 April 2016, the profile contains a relatively small number of posts (653 up to 31 August 2025) but a significant number of stories, indicating that this tool is more actively utilised than the feed. This preference was evident on 30 August 2025 (Saturday), when a single carousel with eight product images was posted, with no reference to the viaduct. On the same day, 12 stories were published, mainly focused on promoting items for sale. The strategy appears to rely on short videos to arouse curiosity and encourage

in-person attendance at the fair, to experience it as a lived space — or, metaphorically, as a palimpsest that must be deciphered for its hidden stories to become visible.

We also observed that the administrators frequently share stories produced by influencers who visit the Feira das Brecholeiras, thereby extending the event's visibility. One example is a reel by the content creator @guelbastos (<https://www.instagram.com/guelbastos/>), who has approximately 21,000 followers¹¹ on Instagram. On 30 August 2025, the Brecholeiras profile shared a 1-minute and 15-second reel produced by the influencer about the fair. The video opens with a reference to the traditional Praça XV fair, held in downtown Rio de Janeiro and considered one of the largest in the city. It then presents the Madureira fair as equally relevant. The influencer highlights that the event takes place beneath a viaduct and offers lower prices than those at Praça XV, calling the Madureira fair “better”. Throughout the video, he walks through the stalls, showcasing merchandise and attractive prices. The story shared on the Brecholeiras profile generated 40 comments, almost all of them positive, mainly from visitors, exhibitors, buyers, and people who learned about the fair through the video. Two comments, in particular, drew our attention. Both called for reduced promotion of the event: “as if Praça XV were not enough, now this one in Madureira will become more expensive thanks to the *playbas* who will want to go there” and “you can stop promoting it already. It is our heritage from the country of Madureira lol. Last Saturday it was packed. Just stop. lol”.

We found the second comment particularly striking, as it refers to the fair as the heritage of the “country of Madureira”, thereby amplifying the neighbourhood's importance to the point of elevating it beyond Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, as if it were a nation in its own right. In both cases, the focus of the comments is not on the fair's visibility, but on concerns about a possible appropriation of the space by “outsiders”. It is as if Madureira should remain distant from those who do not habitually circulate through its streets.

The other reel analysed was shared on 8 August 2025 by the fair's administrators from the profile of influencer Pedro Henrique, who produces lifestyle-related content and has approximately 21,000 followers¹² on Instagram (@phenriquepaula; <https://www.instagram.com/phenriquepaula/>). The 2-minute video opens with images of clothing racks filled with discounted items. Throughout the recording, the influencer highlights products from the brand FARM, considered one of the most sought-after labels at the Feira das Brecholeiras. His commentary focuses primarily on the merchandise and the prices charged, emphasising that he regularly renews his wardrobe whenever he attends the event. In the final 20 seconds, the video draws attention to the Negrão de Lima viaduct and a part of the surrounding commercial area, reinforcing the association between the fair and the Madureira territory. The reel surpassed 40,000 views and generated 639 comments, representing the highest level of engagement among the materials analysed on the @brecholeirasoficial profile. Most interactions consisted of messages such as “I want

¹¹ Data were collected on 30 August 2025.

¹² Data were collected on 26 October 2025.

it sooo much!”, indicating interest in the merchandise and a demand for information about the event. This practice, therefore, proved to be an effective strategy for promoting the fair.

Another noteworthy aspect of the @brecholeirasoficial profile concerns the interval between posts. During the 34 days of analysis (29 July to 30 August 2025), only 11 posts were published, most of them related to the expansion of the event to Cascadura. Indeed, calls promoting the Cascadura edition dominate much of the content published in July and August 2025, revealing a temporary shift in the profile’s communicational centrality. Content analysis showed that five of the 11 posts explicitly referenced the new location.

7. TERRITORIES IN CONNECTION ON YOUTUBE

As detailed in this article’s methodology, to understand how the Feira das Brecholeiras articulates itself with the territory of Madureira across digital platforms, two YouTube videos were included in the analysis.

The first piece of content was published by the channel Eu Te amo Madureira (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BRB7TMOj9A>) and reinforces the strong connection between the fair and the neighbourhood. Released on 29 July 2021, the video had accumulated 1,635 views by 31 August 2025. Over its 17-minute duration, the fair is shown alongside testimonies about the event, interspersed with images that blend and overlap with scenes of Madureira itself, creating a narrative that links urban space to the lived experience of the *brecholeiras*. This fusion of the fair and the neighbourhood reinforces the idea that landscape can be understood as a starting point for analysing the relationship between space and society (Berque, 2012). The video received numerous likes and complimentary comments, both about the fair and the vendors’ work.

The second video, entitled *As Brecholeiras: O Maior Brechó a Céu Aberto do RJ Neste Garimpo Extremo!* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAov5nFHQLI>), was published by the channel Saudapixel Games¹³. It lasts approximately 15 minutes and was released in 2023. The video opens with the presenter beneath the Negrão de Lima flyover and then shows him walking through the streets of Madureira. At several moments, he refers to the neighbourhood as “Madureira City”, highlighting its cultural and symbolic relevance within Rio de Janeiro’s suburban landscape. This is the only material analysed that allows for a visual tour of the neighbourhood. Although the focus is primarily on the goods on sale, the moving images of the fair’s surroundings provide a broader view of the occupation that takes place every Saturday. Numerous comments praise Madureira, endorsing the neighbourhood’s popularity, such as “Madureira good land!” and “Madureira! Lá laiá!! All in together!!”.

The analysis of the Feira das Brecholeiras’ official communication channels and the videos published on YouTube reveals an excessive focus on the fair as a commercial enterprise, failing to capture the lived, everyday experience of the event fully. We found

¹³ YouTube channel offering tips on where to find games for Xbox and PlayStation.

no records of the informal conversation circles that form around the stalls, of spontaneous embraces between vendors and visitors, or of other gestures that convey the spirit of Madureira. Nor is it possible to perceive, in the digital environment, the sense of a “big family”, an expression used by a consumer to describe the fair. The content disseminated is largely centred on promoting an event to sell new and second-hand goods at affordable prices, held in one of the neighbourhood’s most emblematic spaces. As a result, in the digital realm, part of the essence of this occupation is lost.

This contrast between lived and narrated experience occurs because the two involve different perspectives. The former is anchored in the repetition and routine, often silent, of everyday actions (Mendes, 2023). The latter is constructed through the narrator’s subjective and affective lens (Guimarães, 2020). Narrating everyday life, therefore, is a way of giving shape and meaning to experience, resignifying what might initially seem mundane. It is in the passage from “doing” to “saying” that the ordinary becomes a singular expression (Guimarães, 2020; Mendes, 2023).

In most cases, everyday life is edited to be shared on social media. This editing reduces it, confining it to short, fragmented narratives that cannot fully convey the essence of this city-enigma, where everyday experiences do not always align clearly. The situations described at the fair merge with the broader daily life of Madureira, but when narrated on social media, they are reconfigured and transformed into public narratives, shaped and constrained by the dynamics of digital visibility.

In this context, narratives play a central role, as “it is within them that knowledge about the world is woven (...) and from them, other knowledge is constructed” (Resende, 2005, p. 87). The production and circulation of content in the digital environment not only reflect but also present narratives that create and recreate sociabilities and representations, functioning as “social communication practices that, in a mediatised society, definitively contribute to the broadening of the horizons of experience” (Resende, 2005, p. 88).

Despite the dichotomy between lived and narrated everyday life, the connection between the Feira das Brecholeiras and Madureira is undeniable. The materials analysed attest to this interweaving, even if they do not fully capture its essence.

8. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Madureira represents the soul of the Rio de Janeiro suburbs, particularly through the creative occupations that resignify public street spaces. In this context, the Negrão de Lima viaduct stands out as a meeting point between the city as lived and the city as planned by urban designers. Originally designed to facilitate traffic flow, the viaduct reinvents itself as a place when its underpasses are (re)appropriated for multiple cultural activities, such as the Baile Charme and the Feira das Brecholeiras, both held on Saturdays.

Beyond serving as a space for diverse activities, the Negrão de Lima viaduct appears fragmented and in a state of continual recombination: its elements dissolve, cluster, merge, incorporate new components, and take on new forms. These varied uses

demonstrate, as Gomes (2001) argues, that the urban landscape is the product of human actions that continuously shape and reshape space over time, simultaneously hiding and revealing layers.

This dynamic layering connects to what Pesavento (2004) describes as the “urban palimpsest”, a space that must be deciphered to reveal its hidden stories. For Benjamin (1982/2006), cities are enigmas that can only be understood through experience.

A city, its streets, neighbourhoods, and occupations are examples of a city-enigma (Jacques & Velloso, 2023), which must be considered and narrated from a perspective of proximity that surprises and confounds, as everyday experiences in Madureira do not always align predictably. These are lived spaces, interwoven with encounters, memories, and affections, which extend beyond the materiality of the neighbourhood and constitute an open field for interpretations emerging from everyday life.

Unlike what is observed on the Feira das Brecholeiras’ social media accounts and the YouTube content analysed, the event is not reducible to mere commerce. It is much more: a space for the exercise of citizenship, where women work and earn an income through an occupation that drives the suburban economy. The fair is also a space of social interaction and exchange, reflecting the spirit of Madureira.

Our *corpus* analysis showed that lived everyday experience differs from the content narrated on social media. The latter appears edited and condensed, incapable of capturing the essence of the event, which intertwines with the neighbourhood’s. Narrating everyday life produces a narrative distinct from daily experience.

More than a weekly event, the fair is part of the everyday lives of *brecholeiras*, visitors, and consumers, who, through chats at the stalls and frequent embraces, renew social and affective bonds. These encounters transform the Feira das Brecholeiras into a place where everyday life acquires symbolic and emotional density (Brennand, 2021). From this perspective, the fair is an expression of everyday life’s creative potential, serving as a stage for interaction, belonging, and the continuous construction of shared narratives.

Finally, adopting narrative analysis proved suitable for understanding these dynamics, as Bastos and Biar (2015) suggest, allowing dialogue across different areas of knowledge and attentive listening to social actors in diverse contexts. This methodological approach enabled us to capture the complexity of a space that is simultaneously a marketplace, a cultural stage, and a territory of affections, highlighting how the Feira das Brecholeiras and Madureira reflect one another.

Machine Translation Post-Editing: Anabela Delgado

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